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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3162
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6703
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 7761
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2221
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 2567
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 4037
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 8010

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SIPDIS

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN ELECTIONS OBSERVERS

¶1. (U) This is an action request, please see para 3.

¶2. (SBU) Summary. President Musharraf announced November 11 that Pakistan's parliamentary elections will be held by January 9. With imposition of a state of emergency, post believes it is more important than ever to increase the number of election observers and is requesting that DRL provide the International Republican Institute (IRI) with the funds required to add another ten long-term and six short-term observers to its Pakistan mission. Post has requested IRI field another public reaction poll as soon as possible. Ambassador November 10 demarched the Minister of Interior on behalf of IRI, The Asia Foundation and several arrested Pakistani human rights lawyers. End Summary.

¶3. (SBU) President Musharraf announced November 11 that Pakistan's parliamentary elections would be held by January 9. Post will continue to work to persuade the GOP to lift the state of emergency, restore access for all media, and release detained political opposition leaders so that free and fair elections can proceed in January.

¶3. (SBU) Post believes that, given current events, it will be more important than ever to have the maximum number of independent election observers. Action request: We request that DRL provide IRI with the additional funds required to increase the number of long-term observers from 12 to 22 and short-term observers from 40 to 50 (three of which should be able to be funded out of DRL's current grant because IRI will not be conducting an exit poll as originally planned). IRI would send the additional observers to cover key districts in the Punjab heartland where we believe the highest instance of possible fraud will occur. IRI/Pakistan believes this is the correct mix of long-term and short-term to ensure that the overall observer mission is informed and effective, particularly to cover these key constituencies. IRI/Pakistan estimates an additional US \$450,000 will be needed to fund this addition.

¶4. (SBU) Post has also requested that IRI field another poll as soon as possible to take the public temperature on reactions to the State of Emergency and how it is affecting support for political leaders. IRI/Pakistan advises us they plan to start the poll next week.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador met November 10 with Interior Minister Sherpao. She raised USG concern about the arrest and treatment of several Pakistani civil society leaders, including attorneys Aitzaz Ahsan and Munir Malik, as Members of Congress have expressed concern about their welfare. Ambassador also asked Sherpao to intervene to ensure that IRI, which had received a letter from the Economic Affairs Division advising them to leave the country, would be allowed to stay and oversee our elections observation mission. Ambassador also asked Sherpao to intervene in favor of The Asia Foundation local director Jon Summers, who has been advised his visa had been cancelled. Sherpao said he had no information about IRI or

TAF but would look into the cases and get back to us. He assured the Ambassador that Ahsan, Malik and others were being treated properly, were receiving required medications and could receive visits from relatives.

PATTERSON